IN THE SPECIFICATION

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 4, line 14, through page 5, line 1, with the following rewritten paragraph:

A remote control system for controlling a plurality of apparatuses including at least an image forming apparatus is disclosed herein, including a central control system (or center system) comprising a computer unit for receiving information from the plurality of apparatuses via respective telecommunication networks interconnected thereto, and for remotely controlling the plurality of apparatuses based on the information received via the respective telecommunication networks; and including information collection means for collecting, based on the kind of the information presently received, related information from all of the plurality of apparatuses included in the same ~~groups other than that~~ group except the image forming apparatus, from which the information is originally transmitted, in the case where the information is received by the center system from any one of the plurality of apparatuses to be remotely controlled, which are divided into a predetermined number of groups.

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 5, line 14, through page 6, line 2, with the following rewritten paragraph:

According to another aspect, the remote control system for controlling a plurality of apparatuses including at least an image forming apparatus, includes a central control system comprising a computer unit for receiving information from the plurality of apparatuses via respective telecommunication networks interconnected thereto, and for remotely controlling the plurality of apparatuses based on the information received via the respective telecommunication networks; information accumulation means for accumulating information,

in the case where the information is received by the central control system from any one of the plurality of apparatuses, which are divided into a predetermined number of groups; and information retrieval means for retrieving, based on the kind of the information presently received, related information from all of the plurality of apparatuses included in the same ~~groups other than that~~ group except the image forming apparatus, from which the information is originally transmitted, in the case where the information is received by the central control system from any one of the plurality of apparatuses.

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 6, line 14, through page 7, line 23, with the following rewritten paragraph:

According to still another aspect, the remote control system includes at least a central control system comprising a computer unit for receiving information from the plurality of apparatuses via respective telecommunication networks interconnected to the plurality of apparatuses, and for remotely controlling the plurality of apparatuses based on the information received via the respective telecommunication networks; information collection means for collecting, based on the kind of the information presently received, related information from all of the plurality of apparatuses included in the same ~~groups other than that~~ group except the image forming apparatus, from which the information is originally transmitted, in the case where the information is received by the central control system from any one of the plurality of apparatuses to be remotely controlled, which are divided into a predetermined number of groups; first information processing means for processing the information received from any one of the plurality of apparatuses; first information transmission means for transmissively connecting to respective terminal units provided by a plurality of service centers so as to control the plurality of image forming apparatuses in a

manner divided into a predetermined number of groups, and subsequently transmitting the information processed by the information processing means; information accumulation means for accumulating information, in the case where the information is received from any one of the plurality of apparatuses to be remotely controlled, which are divided into a predetermined number of groups; information retrieval means for retrieving, based on the kind of the information presently received, related information from all of the plurality of apparatuses included in the same ~~groups other than that~~ group except the image forming apparatus, from which the information is originally transmitted, in the case where the information is received by the central control system from any one of the plurality of apparatuses; second information processing means for processing the information either received from any one of the plurality of apparatuses or retrieved by the information retrieval means; second information transmission means for transmissively connecting to respective terminal units provided by a plurality of service centers so as to control the plurality of image forming apparatuses in a manner divided into a predetermined number of groups, and subsequently transmitting the information processed by the information processing means; and means for determining one between following two: whether any one of processing steps by the information collection means, first information processing means, first information transmission means, information retrieval means, second information processing means, and second information transmission means, is allowed, or none of the steps is allowed.

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 7, line 24, through page 8, line 13, with the following rewritten paragraph:

According to another aspect, a method for controlling a plurality of apparatuses including at least an image forming apparatus is disclosed, including at least the step of

receiving information relayed to a central control system from the plurality of apparatuses via respective telecommunication networks; controlling remotely the plurality of apparatuses based on the thus received information; collecting information related to pre-maintenance and to expendable supplies and material from all of the plurality of apparatuses included in the same ~~groups other than that~~ group except the image forming apparatus, from which the information is originally transmitted, in the case where the information related to pre-maintenance and to expendable supplies and material is received from any one of the plurality of apparatuses; processing either received or collected information by information processing means; transmissively connecting to respective terminal units provided by a plurality of service centers so as to control the plurality of image forming apparatuses in a manner divided into a predetermined number of groups; and transmitting the information processed by the information processing means.

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 8, line 20, through page 10, line 5, with the following rewritten paragraph:

According to another aspect, a central control system (or center system) included in the remote control system is disclosed for controlling a plurality of apparatuses including at least an image forming apparatus, based on information received by the central control system via respective telecommunication networks interconnected to the plurality of apparatuses, including at least information collection means for collecting, based on the kind of the information presently received, related information from all of the plurality of apparatuses included in the same ~~groups other than that~~ group except the image forming apparatus, from which the information is originally transmitted, in the case where the information related to pre-maintenance and to expendable supplies and material is received

by the central control system from any one of the plurality of apparatuses to be remotely controlled, which are divided into a predetermined number of groups; first information processing means for processing the information received from any one of the plurality of apparatuses; first information transmission means for transmissively connecting to respective terminal units provided by a plurality of service centers so as to control the plurality of image forming apparatuses in a manner divided into a predetermined number of groups, and subsequently transmitting the information processed by the information processing means; information accumulation means for accumulating information, in the case where the information is received from any one of the plurality of apparatuses to be remotely controlled, which are divided into a predetermined number of groups; information retrieval means for retrieving, based on the kind of the information presently received, related information from all of the plurality of apparatuses included in the same ~~groups other than that~~ group except the image forming apparatus, from which the information is originally transmitted, in the case where the information is received by the central control system from any one of the plurality of apparatuses; second information processing means for processing the information either received from any one of the plurality of apparatuses, or retrieved by the information retrieval means; second information transmission means for transmissively connecting to respective terminal units provided by a plurality of service centers so as to control the plurality of image forming apparatuses in a manner divided into a predetermined number of groups, and subsequently transmitting the information processed by the information processing means; and means for determining whether any one of processing steps by the information collection means, first information processing means, first information transmission means, information retrieval means, second information processing

means, and second information transmission means, is allowed, or none of the steps is allowed.

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 10, line 6, through page 11, line 13, with the following rewritten paragraph:

According to another aspect, a computer accessible recording medium is disclosed, tangibly embodying a program of instructions executable by a central control system included in a remote control system to perform method steps for controlling a plurality of apparatuses including at least an image forming apparatus, based on information received by the central control system via respective telecommunication networks interconnected to the plurality of apparatuses, in which the steps includes at least collecting, based on the kind of the information presently received, related information from all of the plurality of apparatuses included in the same ~~groups other than that~~ group except the image forming apparatus, from which the information is originally transmitted, in the case where the information related to pre-maintenance and to expendable supplies and material is received by the central control system from any one of the plurality of apparatuses to be remotely controlled, which are divided into a predetermined number of groups; processing the information received from any one of the plurality of apparatuses; transmissively connecting to respective terminal units provided by a plurality of service centers so as to control the plurality of image forming apparatuses in a manner divided into a predetermined number of groups, and subsequently transmitting the information processed by the information processing means; accumulating the information, in the case where the information is received from any one of the plurality of apparatuses to be remotely controlled, which are divided into a predetermined number of groups; retrieving, based on the kind of the information presently received, related

information from all of the plurality of apparatuses included in the same ~~groups other than that~~group except the image forming apparatus, from which the information is originally transmitted, in the case where the information is received by the central control system from any one of the plurality of apparatuses; processing the information either received from any one of the plurality of apparatuses or retrieved by the information retrieval means; transmissively connecting to respective terminal units provided by a plurality of service centers so as to control the plurality of image forming apparatuses in a manner divided into a predetermined number of groups, and subsequently transmitting the information processed by the information processing means; and determining whether any one of processing steps by the information collection means, first information processing means, first information transmission means, information retrieval means, second information processing means, and second information transmission means, is allowed, or none of the steps is allowed.

Please replace the paragraph at page 22, lines 15-18, with the following rewritten paragraph:

After completing Step 3, the process proceeds to Step 4, where a program is executed, in response to the kind of the received information identified as above, to collect the corresponding information from other image forming apparatuses included in the same ~~groups other than that~~ group except the image forming apparatus, from which the information is originally received.

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 22, line 19, through page 23, line 3, with the following rewritten paragraph:

As an example, when the client 2a included in the center system 1 receives, from one of image forming apparatuses within its interconnection, information regarding the arrival of the pre-maintenance date (or pre-maintenance date information), several steps are executed so as to identify the kind of the thus received information, to store (or accumulate) the information into a temporal reception DB 59b in the server 3, and then to collect, in response to the kind of the received information, the information related to the arrival of the pre-maintenance date (pre-maintenance date information) from other image forming apparatuses included in the same ~~groups other than that~~ group except the image forming apparatus, from which the information is originally transmitted.

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 23, lines 4-10, with the following rewritten paragraph:

Namely, based on the kind of the received information thus obtained, by sending out sensing instructions to other image forming apparatuses included in the same groups within its interconnection other than that, from which the information is originally transmitted (i.e., to other image forming apparatuses included in the same ~~groups other than that~~ group except the image forming apparatus, from which the pre-maintenance date information is transmitted), responded information (on the pre-maintenance date) can thus be collected from all of other image forming apparatuses.

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 24, lines 4-9, with the following rewritten paragraph:

As described above, when information is received by the respective clients 2a, 2b, ... , 2n in the center system 1 from any one of the plurality of image forming apparatuses, which

are divided into a predetermined number of groups, the center system 1 instructs to collect responded information from all of the image forming apparatuses included in the same ~~groups within its interconnection other than that~~ group except the image forming apparatus, from which the information is originally transmitted.

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 25, lines 4-8, with the following rewritten paragraph:

After step 13, the process proceeds to step 14, where a program is executed, in response to the kind of the received information identified above, to retrieve from the temporal reception DB 59b the corresponding information which is received from other image forming apparatuses included in the same ~~groups other than that~~ group except the image forming apparatus, from which the information is originally received.

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 26, lines 2-9, with the following rewritten paragraph:

As described above, when information is received by the respective clients 2a, 2b, ... 2n in the center system 1 from any one of the plurality of image forming apparatuses, which are divided into a predetermined number of groups, the center system 1 instructs to accumulate the received information into the temporal reception DB 59b, and to retrieve from the temporal reception DB 59b, in response to the kind of the received information obtained previously, the related information already received from all of the other image forming apparatuses included in the same ~~groups other than that~~ group except the image forming apparatus, from which the information is originally transmitted.

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 27, lines 17-21, with the following rewritten paragraph:

As an example, information regarding the arrival of the pre-maintenance date is either received from an image forming apparatus, or from other image forming apparatuses included in the same ~~groups other than that~~ group except the image forming apparatus, from which the information is originally received; or obtained through retrieval process from the temporal reception DB 59b, the process proceeds as follows.

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 29, lines 15-23, with the following rewritten paragraph:

Accordingly, when information is received regarding to the set items such as, for example, pre-maintenance and supplies from at least one of the plurality of image forming apparatuses (FIG. 1 or 8), which are provided by the plurality of customers A, B, ... and divided into a predetermined number of groups, a program is executed to collect the information related to the set items from other image forming apparatuses included in the same ~~groups other than that~~ group except the image forming apparatus, from which the information is originally received, and also to retrieve the previously received and stored (or accumulated) information from the temporal reception DB 59b.

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 29, line 24, through page 30, line 7, with the following rewritten paragraph:

As described above, the kind of information to be either received or retrieved is set in advance in the present embodiment. Namely, when information is received by the respective clients 2a, 2b, ... , 2n in the center system 1 from any one of the plurality of image forming

apparatuses, which are divided into a predetermined number of groups, the center system 1 instructs to collect the information related to the set items from other image forming apparatuses included in the same ~~groups other than that~~ group except the image forming apparatus, from which the information is originally received, and also to retrieve the previously received and stored (or accumulated) information from the temporal reception DB 59b.

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 40, lines 15-18, with the following rewritten paragraph:

For example, when the newest or updated information is required on other image forming apparatuses included in the same ~~groups other than that~~ group except the image forming apparatus, from which the information is originally received, the flag for information collection is set (i.e., information collection/ processing is allowed).

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 41, lines 7-10, with the following rewritten paragraph:

Thereafter, if the flag is set, collection/ processing steps are carried out, in response to the kind of received information, on the corresponding information (on the pre-maintenance ) received from image forming apparatuses included in the same ~~groups other than that~~ group except the image forming apparatus, from which the information is originally received.

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 41, lines 13-17, with the following rewritten paragraph:

If no flag is set, the process of FIG. 16 ends. In contrast, if the flag is set, retrieval/ processing steps are carried out in response to the kind of received information, by retrieving from the temporal reception DB 59b the corresponding information (on the pre-maintenance) received from image forming apparatuses included in the same ~~groups other than that~~ group except the image forming apparatus, from which the information is originally received.

Please replace the Abstract at page 76, lines 1-12, with the following new Abstract: